

Basin Plan Amendment to Update Onsite System Criteria (9)

Central Coast Water Board Staff Report
May 9, 2008
Sorrel Marks

Amendment Objectives

- Update 25-year old Basin Plan criteria
- Long-term water quality protection
- Low maintenance, low cost, low tech systems
- Retrofit of properly-functioning systems not required

Existing Basin Plan Criteria

- Adopted in 1983 in Resolution No. 83-12
- Siting, design, construction, maintenance & management
- Voluntary compliance (recommended actions)
- Formerly implemented through MOUs
- Applied in local permitting of new systems

CEQA Compliance

- Physical changes in the environment?
- Water Board complied with CEQA
- Exempt from normal procedural requirements
(substitute environmental document)
- Update existing Water Board regulations
- No new regulatory process
- No project approval
- Strengthening environmental regulations
- Public participation

Existing Systems

- Does not require retrofit of functioning systems
- Failed system repairs (greatest extent practicable)
- Addressed in onsite management plans
 - Potential water quality impacts characterized
 - Inspection, monitoring, maintenance & repair
 - Public education
 - Disclosure

Proposed Revisions

Strengthen recommendations to requirements

- Onsite management plans required
- Contents of onsite management plans
- Certified professional design on slopes >20%
- System maintenance required
- No brine without salts minimization plan
- Needed for local agency implementation

Proposed Revisions (continued)

- Added definitions page
- Streamlined definition of “watercourse”
- Additional treatment for very fast percolating soils
- Prohibited in 25-year flood plain
- Fill designed as disposal area
- Applicable to new systems

Onsite Management Plans

1. Survey and evaluation of existing onsite systems
2. Water quality (ground and surface water) monitoring program
3. Projections of onsite disposal system demand and determination of methods to best meet demand
4. Recommendations and requirements for existing onsite wastewater system inspection, monitoring, maintenance and repairs
5. Recommendations and requirements for new onsite wastewater systems

Onsite Management Plans

6. Alternative means of disposing of sewage in the event of disposal system failure and/or irreversible degradation from onsite disposal
7. Education and outreach
8. Enforcement options
9. Septage management
10. Program administration, staffing, records keeping, installation and repairs tracking, and financing

Existing text recommends three additional components (to be deleted)

Comments

- Response to comments in Staff Report
- Cost of onsite management plans
(Existing actions meet many of the components)
- Consistency with proposed AB885 regulations
(Regional Boards required to be consistent)
- Public notice
- Equipment demonstration
- City of Atascadero request to delay

Corrections to Attachment A

- p.2 Delete “(also called sidewall)” from Application area definition.
- p.4 ¶3 & p.11 #14 Delete the term “substantial”.
- p.5 #3 Leave existing text unchanged.
- p.7 ¶1 Delete last sentence “In the context of these criteria, new systems shall refer to onsite wastewater systems approved after May 9, 2008.”
- p.8 #13 Deleted text not shown “While new septic tank systems should generally be limited to new divisions of land having a minimum parcel size of one acre, where soil and other physical constraints are particularly favorable, parcel size shall not be less than one-half acre.”
- p.8 #21 Replace existing footnote “Unless a setback distance of at least 250 feet to any domestic water supply well or surface water is ensured.”
- P.8 #23 Additional treatment required for seepage pits in gravel soils.

Amendment Conclusions

- Update needed to clarify and strengthen Basin Plan criteria
- Need requirements rather than suggestions
- Protection of surface water, groundwater and public health

Recommend adopting Resolution No. R3-2008-0005
with corrections

(to be forwarded for State Water Board & OAL review and approval)